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USSR

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"AKHMED's" REPORT OF A CONFIDENTIAL
PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BY "MEN"

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From: NEW YORK

To: MOSCOW

Nos: 1766-1768

15 December 1944

[Three-part message complete]

[Part I] To VIKTOR[i].

According to a report of AKHMED[i] on
26th October 1944 in CARTHAGE [KARFAGEN][iii] the Master
of the COUNTRY HOUSE [DACHA][iv] (henceforth "MEN [MEN]"[v])
gave a confidential interview to seven or eight selected
correspondents. Here is the gist of what MEN said:

1. During the conversations with the LONDON
Poles the Russians expressed themselves "frankly and
honestly".

"So far we have not recognised the Russians'
claims to the Curzon Line. The Government of the U.S.S.R.
has not made any commitment in this respect. I am
quite sure that Russia will defend her claims to her
future frontiers with extreme tenacity." The USSR
adopts a very realistic attitude to Poland and the other
small countries of Eastern Europe. For her evidently

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the security of the future Russian frontiers [C% is more important] than the Atlantic Charter. "I personally very much hope that the Polish question will be settled satisfactorily from our point of view. There will be an independent Poland in the sense which we attribute to independence. She will be free to choose her government. There is no evidence that Russia is preparing to swallow up Poland, Finland or other countries. I have noticed here a great deal of pessimism regarding the Polish question. This pessimism in the main comes from LONDON circles. In LONDON there are Poles who cannot reconcile themselves to the thought of losing their properties. I personally would not attach much importance to these LONDON Polish sources."

[Part II] 2. Regarding the Balkans, between the USSR and Britain "there exists a very wide divergence of opinions" [1 group unrecovered] "reciprocally [2 groups unrecovered]" (MEN is referring to CHURCHILL's latest talks). There is no

[34 groups unrecoverable]

namely that Russian suspicions of us and Britain have considerably decreased."

3. "We have not had [5 groups unrecovered] opportunity [2 groups unrecovered] [D% contact with the USSR] in the future. In the USSR I have never let this slip despite the fact that there is only one thing the Russians are afraid of - our isolationism. They remember what happened after the last war and are afraid of a repetition We must inspire the Russians with the conviction that [B% we] shall not slip back again into the camp of their [B% imperialist] opponents. If we make an honest attempt to find a common [B% language] with Russia I am sure that [B% the results] will be very good [1 group unrecovered] JOHNSTON [1 group unrecovered] indicating the vast opportunities for us in the field of a future trade agreement with Russia Economically Russia is a backward country. The Russians understand this and so their plans are not confined to reconstruction, but envisage further development. They have gold and are solvent."

[Part III] 4. "The question (of the future participation of the USSR in the war against Japan) has recently frequently been raised in the American press. This [B% one can] only regret. Russia quite naturally [B% does not want] a war on two fronts. Our guesses and suppositions on this subject very much worry them as they are apprehensive of the reactions of TOKIO."

5. "Before CHURCHILL's arrival, during my meetings with STALIN I was struck by STALIN's detailed knowledge and deep understanding [C% of the foreign

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policy [D~~C~~ of the COUNTRY [STRANA]]. He has always given due appreciation to the part taken by the U.S.A. in the war "[.] The Soviet newspapers "may give the impression of under-estimating our effort, but STALIN does not show any such lack of appreciation."

Russia does not

[35 groups unrecoverable]

[C~~C~~ where] their spheres of influence adjoin [C~~C~~ Russia] undoubtedly [1 group unrecovered] all questions in agreement with the U.S.A. and Britain.

In a conversation with his sister MEN in particular declared that he respects the patriotic feelings of the Poles, but that the Poles are a very difficult people and among the LONDON Poles there are quite impossible and intransigent people.

No. 965
14th December

MAY [MAJ][vi]

Comments: [i] VIKTOR: probably Lt-General P.M. FITIN.
[ii] AKHMED: unidentified.
[iii] KARFAGEN: WASHINGTON, D.C.
[iv] DACHA: U.S. Embassy in MOSCOW.
[v] MEN: William Averell HARRIMAN.
[vi] MAJ: ~~Pavel Ivanovich PEDOSIMOV~~
Stepan Antonov

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